

James Monroe to Andrew Jackson, December 21, 1818, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

PRESIDENT MONROE TO JACKSON.

Washington, December 21, 1818.

Dear Sir, I recev'd your letter of novr. 15. sometime past, and should have answer'd it sooner, but for the great pressure of business on me, proceeding from duties, connected with the measures of Congress.

The step suggested in mine to you, of Octr 20th, will I am inclined to believe, be unnecessary. my sole object in it, was, to enable you, to place your view of the authority under which you acted in Florida, on the strongest ground possible, so as to do complete justice to yourself. I was persuaded, that you had not done yourself justice, in that respect, in your correspondence with the dept., and thought, that it would be better, that the explanation should commence with you, than be invited by the dept. . . . It appear'd to me that that would be the most delicate course in regard to yourself. There is, it is true, nothing in the dept., to indicate a difference of opinion, between you and the Executive, respecting the import of your instructions, and for the reason, that it would have been difficult to have expressed that sentiment, without implying by it, a censure on your conduct, than which nothing could be more remote from our disposition or intention.

On receiving your communications by Mr Hambly, three objects were preeminently in view; the first, to preserve the constitution from injury; the second, to deprive Spain and the allied powers, of any just cause of war; and the third, to improve the occurrence to the best advantage of the country, and of the honor of those engaged in it. In every step, which I

Library of Congress

have since taken, I have pursued these objects, with the utmost zeal, and according to my best judgment. In what concerns you personally, I have omitted nothing, in my power, to do you justice; nor shall I in the sequel of the business.

On what ground you have form'd the opinion stated in your letter, respecting a certain gentleman, is unknown to me. It is due to candour to state, that I have seen nothing, of that character myself; and that the decision of the administration, on the three great points above stated, respecting the course to be pursued by the administration, was unanimously concurr'd in, and that I have good reason to believe, that it has been maintain'd since, in every particular, by all, with perfect integrity.

It will be gratifying to you to know, that a letter of instructions has been drawn, by the Secretary of State,¹ to our minister at Madrid in reply to the letter of Mr Pizarro, which has been published, in which, all the proceedings in Florida, and in regard to it, have been fully review'd, and plac'd in a light which will I think be satisfactory to all. This letter will be reported to Congress, in a few days, and published of course.

¹ Adams to Ewing, Nov. 28, 1818. *Am. St. Pap., For. Rel.*, IV. 539–545.

with great respect and sincere regard I am dear sir yours